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THESIS

CHANGING AMERICAN ASSESSMENTS OF THE SOVIET THREAT IN AFRICA: 1975-1985

by

Donald L. Jordan, Jr.

December 1985

Thesis Advisor: M. W. Clough

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T226740

:CURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS
a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY	3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited
b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE	
PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)	5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)
a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION: Naval Postgraduate School / 6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (*If applicable*): Code 56	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION: Naval Postgraduate School
c. ADDRESS (*City, State, and ZIP Code*): Monterey, California 93943-5100	7b. ADDRESS (*City, State, and ZIP Code*): Monterey, California 93943-5100
a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION / 8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (*If applicable*)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
c. ADDRESS (*City, State, and ZIP Code*)	10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS: PROGRAM ELEMENT NO. / PROJECT NO. / TASK NO. / WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.

1 TITLE (*Include Security Classification*)

HANGING AMERICAN ASSESSMENTS OF THE SOVIET THREAT IN AFRICA: 1975-1985

2 PERSONAL AUTHOR(S)

Jordan, Donald L.

3a TYPE OF REPORT	13b. TIME COVERED	14. DATE OF REPORT (*Year, Month, Day*)	15. PAGE COUNT
Master's Thesis	FROM _____ TO _____	1985 December	120

6. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION

7 COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (*Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number*)
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	Africa, Soviet Union, threat, alarmist, conservative, liberal, confident liberal, image, assessment

9 ABSTRACT (*Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number*)

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This study identifies and explicates the components of a threat assessment in order to categorize different images of the Soviet threat. Four different images are examined, two of which appear to change over time. Finally, changes in liberal and conservative assessments of the Soviet threat in Africa from 1975-1985 are detailed in order to demonstrate that changing assessments are directly related to the core elements of each image.

20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT	21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
☒ UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED ☐ SAME AS RPT. ☐ DTIC USERS	(Unclassified)

22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL	22b. TELEPHONE (*Include Area Code*)	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL
Michael W. Clough	(408)-646-3671	Code 56

DD FORM 1473, 84 MAR — 83 APR edition may be used until exhausted. All other editions are obsolete. — SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

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Changing American Assessments of the Soviet Threat in Africa: 1975-1985

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MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 1985

ABSTRACT

Perceptions of the Soviet Union as a threat to the national interests of the United States affect virtually every aspect of American policy. Differing assessments of the threat necessarily require different policy responses. It is important to understand the range of differing assessments in order to support a coherent American foreign policy.

This study identifies and explicates the components of a threat assessment in order to categorize different images of the Soviet threat. Four different images are examined, two of which appear to change over time. Finally, changes in liberal and conservative assessments of the Soviet threat in Africa from 1975-1985 are detailed in order to demonstrate that changing assessments are directly related to the core elements of each image.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Beliefs about the nature of the "Soviet threat" affect virtually every aspect of American policy. American images of this threat, however, vary widely. The particular image which is held by policy makers will influence, if not determine, their policy preferences. For this reason, it is important to understand the nature and full range of alternative images of the Soviet threat that guide U.S. foreign policy elites.

Each image of the Soviet threat has a characteristic set of components. By identifying these components, it is possible to differentiate competing images. This study seeks to identify the core components of alternative images and analyze the ways in which particular images have influenced and been influenced by, perceptions of African developments.

Images of the Soviet threat are a complex blend of many attitudes and beliefs. Four images, each representing a different mix of general beliefs and particular attitudes, can be identified. These four images can be labeled: (1) alarmist; (2) conservative; (3) liberal; and (4) apologist. Each of these images represents an "ideal type" which is only approximated in reality. The actual images which guide policymakers are not as simple and distinct as these four

images. Constructing ideal types, however, makes it possible to differentiate alternative images and, hence, order the debate over the Soviet threat. Because the apologist position is not represented in the current U.S. debate over policy toward the Third World, it is not considered in this study. Chapter three outlines the other three positions, along with a sub-category, the confident liberal. As will be demonstrated, only two of these images, the conservative and the liberal, are dynamic, changing their assessment of the Soviet threat in response to events in the Third World. For practical reasons, this study focuses on assessments of the Soviet threat in Africa from 1975 to 1985. Although any image of the Soviet threat contains an inherent set of implications for U.S. policy, these implications will not be detailed, nor will any particular image be supported or rebutted by the author.

II. SOURCES

This monograph is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of all literature relating to the perceptions of the Soviet threat. However, a serious attempt has been made to review the work of many individuals who are representative of the major threat assessment categories. Numerous books were invaluable; certainly too many to mention here. However, as is evident in the body of this paper, William Welch's American Images of Soviet Foreign Policy (1970) provides a useful framework from which to begin any work of this kind. Special mention must also be made of the work done on the operationalization of belief systems by Dr. Ole R. Holsti of Duke University.

Insights into the complex issues which faced the various US administrations during these times were provided by the memoirs of Henry Kissinger, Cyrus Vance, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, among others.

Finally, the substance and tone of well-informed "popular" opinion was gleaned from editorial pieces published by The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and The New York Times over the ten year period under

examination. Regardless of the official editorial stances taken by these newspapers, a variety of individual positions were printed by each, providing a wealth of short, concise statements of various assessments.

III. IMAGES OF THE SOVIET THREAT

The purpose of this work is to trace American assessments of the Soviet threat in Africa over a period of time. This initially requires a means of categorizing different assessments. By examining the major components of each assessment images can be distinguished from one another.

Images contain two basic types of beliefs: beliefs about the internal forces underlying Soviet foreign policy, and beliefs about external influences on Soviet foreign policy. Internal factors include beliefs about: (1) Soviet goals; (2) the sources of those goals; (3) how those goals are pursued; and (4) how foreign policy decisions are made in the U.S.S.R. External factors include beliefs about: (1) the nature and structure of the international system; and (2) the character of the Third World.

Beliefs about the nature of Soviet goals are the cornerstones of any image of the Soviet threat. Such beliefs range from those of the alarmists, who believe Soviet policy makers are guided by long-range grand designs for world domination, to some liberals who see the Soviets as primarily defensive. Conservatives and most liberals generally agree that the Soviet Union is expansionist, but disagree on the motives behind its expansionism and the

degree to which that expansionism may be limited by other nondispositional factors. Beliefs about the underlying sources or determinants of Soviet goals are also an important element in any categorization of images of the Soviet threat.

Means of pursuit are the ways in which the Soviet Union attempts to achieve its goals. Beliefs about these means of pursuit relate directly to beliefs about Soviet goals. Alarmist beliefs about the nature of Soviet goals tend to be supplemented by images of single-minded and harsh means. Conversely, softer views of Soviet goals tend to be associated with more nuanced, mixed images of Soviet means.

Beliefs about the effectiveness and efficiency of the Soviet decision-making machinery also color overall images of the Soviet threat. Beliefs about this component are again consistent with images of the other components. While the alarmist tends to see the decision-making apparatus as powerful and unconstrained, softer images tend to recognize bureaucratic and organizational constraints.

Beliefs about the nature of the contemporary international system obviously affect images of the Soviet threat. Whether one believes the international system is tightly polarized or somewhat pluralistic, for example, will significantly influence one's assessments of Soviet actions.

Perceptions of the Soviet threat in Africa are also affected by images of the character and nature of the

continent. The political, military, economic, and social realities of Africa are seen as both creating opportunies for and limiting Soviet influence. Once again, perceptions of this particular component break down along the alarmist-conservative-liberal lines.

A. THE ALARMIST IMAGE OF THE SOVIET THREAT

Alarmists see the Soviet Union as militantly and ceaselessly expansionist. The ultimate goal is a world communist state, total and complete victory over the capitalist system. From this perspective Soviet policies are "an integral part of a global strategy aimed at weakening and subversion of the West." [Ref. 1: p. 47] According to Daniel O. Graham.

> The USSR is proceeding . . . on the basis of a comprehensively conceived and firmly held global strategy that has as its overall purpose eroding the world power and influence of the United States, and as its cutting edge exacerbating and exploiting U.S. difficulties in any region of the world, such as southern Africa, that promise to contribute to this purpose. [Ref. 2: p. vii]

Arguments of this kind generally depend on assumptions concerning the importance of geostrategic considerations to the economic and political survival of the United States. Retired US Navy Admiral Robert Hanks is representative of this school of thought, placing heavy emphasis on Soviet naval buildup and global "choke points."

> Assured access to sources of supply--as well as to markets for exports, the latter crucial to the nation's ability to pay for needed imports--lies at the heart of the problem, for a new threat to that assured access has risen over the past two decades--a menace which has gone almost unremarked in the West in general and the US in particular. The threat is manifested primarily in the appearance of a large, modern, blue-water navy wearing the Hammer and Sickle of the Soviet Union. [Ref. 3: p. v]

Because of the geostrategic nature of this image, alarmists view Africa as of crucial economic and strategic importance to the West. For example, Ian Greig writes: "Indeed, it can be argued that if Southern Africa were to fall into anti-Western hands, the West could not survive at all." [Ref. 4: p. 1]

If the alarmist believes the overriding Soviet goal is the creation of a Communist dominated world-order, the source of this expanionism is a lust for power based in Communist ideology. While there are other factors, such as Russian history, the root of Soviet aggressiveness lies within the Marxist-Leninist system itself.

> Experience of the past 67 years indicates that no attempt to influence Soviet behavior has succeeded: neither diplomatic ostracism, nor Yalta-like conferences, nor nuclear threats, nor economic bribery. This record of failure indicates that the cause of Soviet aggression lies deeper--that it is systemic. [Ref. 5: p. 13]

The alarmist image implies that the Soviets are prepared to take any and all actions necessary in the pursuance of unlimited expansion. Their policy is viewed as aggressively

ambitious, initiatory not reactive. Again the alarmist image of Soviet methods focuses on geostrategic concerns. "One aspect of Soviet strategy has remained consistent: to encourage and exploit denial to the West of benefits from control over the economic resources of the Third World." [Ref. 2: p. 9]

> Moscow has seen all of Africa, but particularly Black Africa, as offering an especially promising focal point in their strategy of struggle to erode U.S. power and influence throughout the world. As a beginning point, the Soviets have demonstrated acute awareness, more so in fact than Americans appear to, of the economic and strategic importance of this mineral-rich region to the U.S. and its allies. [Ref. 2: p. xvi]

Soviet objectives in Africa, say the alarmists, reflect the overall goal of world domination. "The principle hypothesis is that Soviet ambitions in Southern Africa mirror a broad perspective in Moscow at the present juncture in the evolution of the global power balance." [Ref. 2: p. xxvii] Africa provides opportunities which the Soviets will relentlessly exploit. Tangible evidence supports this position, claim the alarmists, including the rise in Soviet naval power and the obvious "drive" of the Soviets into Southern Africa.

In the alarmist view, the Soviet decision-making system is an efficient, monolithic machine subject to no internal constraints of any consequence. The state is a rational actor, choosing policies with very clear goals in mind and swiftly, effectively implementing these decisions. The

alarmist image acknowledges that the Soviet decision-making process can be affected from outside the system, but only through extreme measures. Only a forceful show of U.S. resolve can deter the Soviets once a decision has been made. The decision-making apparatus is seen as highly inflexible.

The alarmist believes the international system is very polarized. In this view, with no neutral states, the world is clearly divided into two camps. Competition and conflict involving all important international actors is inevitable. William Welch describes this view of inevitable polarization as follows:

> External alignments and interstate groupings follow naturally, in compostion, structure, and functioning, upon internal structure, by which they are generated. The biggest and strongest of the Communist states welds the lesser ones into a single organism, the better to pursue its aggressive aims, and it imposes on this bloc a tyrannical control. The biggest and strongest of the democracies thereupon seeks, in reaction, to rally around it the lesser democracies and non-Communist states, and to unite them in collective defense alliances, which it leads through persuasion and exhortation as the first among equals. The two groups exhaust the possibilities. There is no true third alignment category. Those who claim to be neutral are not truly such: if not clearly favoring the democratic camp, they are for all intents and purposes in the enemy's. [Ref. 6: p. 268]

The world, then, is divided clearly between "those forces friendly or contributory to the desired future order of peace and justice and those forces not friendly or

contributory to such order." [Ref. 6: p. 268] Superior force and American resolve are the tools with which to counter Soviet influence in a strictly polarized, zero-sum, alarmist world view.

The alarmist believes conditions in Africa offer tremendous opportunities for Soviet gains. The weakness of African political structures is seen as a clear opportunity for the Soviets to establish a concrete political presence. Because the continent is inherently unstable, African leaders are quick to seize upon any ready solution. The blueprint of Communism offers that solution, say the alarmists, by providing inexperienced and insecure African leaders with ready-made strategies and tactics with which to attack immediately pressing problems. This political naivete, say the alarmists, allows for substantial Soviet gains. Further, nationalist and secessionist movements abound throughout Africa and these groups are also susceptible to Soviet bids.

Alarmists also believe that the military weakness of virtually every black African nation provides the Soviets with ample opportunity to seduce governments with offers of defense assistance, creating dependencies that will not easily be reversed.

B. THE CONSERVATIVE IMAGE OF THE SOVIET THREAT

The conservative sees the Soviet Union as slightly less expansionist and militant than the alarmist. While this image "continues to affirm of (Soviet) behavior an aggressiveness menacing to peace and order among nations" [Ref. 6: p. 100], it also recognizes the existence of certain limits to Soviet objectives. The impact of ideological and strategic considerations on Soviet policy is limited local conditions. There is no Soviet master plan which is followed with single-minded purpose. As Jiri Valenta has pointed out,

> . . . Soviet leaders have not in recent years operated with a carefully thought out master plan vis-a-vis Africa. In fact, events have tended to shape their behavior more than their behavior has shaped events. It was clearly the dissolution of the Portugese empire, the pressure from the Chinese to play the influence game, and the distribution of power among the competing forces in Angola, for example, that prompted to USSR to resume aid to Neto and strengthen its ties with the MPLA . . . . If such an important Soviet undertaking as the Angola enterprise reflects no broad scheme for the continent, then it hardly seems likely that such a scheme underlies Soviet ventures of lesser consequence. [Ref. 7: p. 116]

Valenta is quick to point out, however, geo-political concerns do influence Moscow's calculations. "(T)he courses that Soviet leaders have chosen to pursue in specific African situations have not reflected assessments

of just local African factors. Not infrequently, great-power considerations may weigh more heavily in the minds of Soviet decision-makers than concrete African circumstances." [Ref. 7: p. 116]

Conservatives view Africa as strategically and economically important to the United States, although certainly not as crucial as the alarmists claim. In their view, the U.S. does have vital interests on the continent which must be actively protected against Soviet inroads. Soviet advances, again, are not simply blind adventurism.

> . . . the unique circumstances of Soviet involvement in Angola and the Horn and the shortage of facts fail to indicate that the Soviets are following a coherent course based on some form of master plan to win over Africa. At the same time, the Soviet Union undoubtedly has a certain predisposition, moreover a number of unifying themes, behind its African involvement. Does this amount to strategy? Perhaps. In the final analysis, an imperfect and contradictory strategy is strategy nevertheless when it provides a general direction for foreign policy--as is happening in the case of Soviet exploits in Africa. [Ref. 8: p. 38]

While conservatives agree that ideology is a major cause of Soviet expansionism, they do not believe it is the only or even the predominant cause. In their view, Soviet ideological drives are mixed with more pragmatic considerations, especially concerns about security. Because the conservative does not see Soviet goals as rigidly rooted in the Soviet system, a significant difference between the conservative and alarmist images. The conservative sees

potential for change in Soviet behavior. Soviet behavior is perceived to be somewhat flexible and capable of evolution.

The conservative image also holds that the Soviets are engaged in a concerted effort to erode U.S. influence, but an effort limited somewhat by Soviet capabilities. The Soviet Union is not, in this view single-minded in its actions. Although highly active and initiatory, the Soviets are also sensitive to the moves of others therefore, at times, reactive.

This active, initiatory policy is evident in Africa. Morris Rothenberg notes that "the USSR has diplomatic relations with every country in Africa except South Africa, Malawi, and Swaziland. It has trade, economic and technical, cultural, and scientific agreements with most of them." [Ref. 9: p. 67] Although conservatives find clear evidence that the Soviet Union foments conflict and opposes peaceful political solutions to problems in Africa, they do not see Soviet methods as completely heavy-handed. This image allows for some flexibility and caution in Soviet actions, but to a much more limited degree than does the liberal image.

The conservative image of Soviet decision-making, like the alarmist image, focuses on the relative lack of domestic constraint on Soviet decision-making. However, it recognizes that some constraints do exist which at times affect policy choices. This image correlates closely with

one of Ole R. Holsti's models in which

> policies are believed to reflect the inertia and other attributes of policy-making by large bureaucratic organizations. Thus, policy is likely to be characterized by continuity (even when circumstances have changed enough to result in something less than totally-rational policies). Leaders come and go, but the main contours of policy change at a glacial pace, if at all, because pre-existing organizational processes, commitments, SOPs and the like, importantly influence policy. [Ref. 10: p. 104]

This image perceives major changes in Soviet policy to be more a function of U.S. resolve than of internal developments. There is internal "pulling and tugging"[1] which does affect decision-making, but any major shift in policy is seen as a result of American willingness to place obstacles in the Soviet path. Conditions on the ground also figure into Soviet planning, but, again, these considerations are less important.

Africa retains a high Soviet priority in the conservative image, although, again, not as high as would be claimed by the alarmist camp. "After years of limited interest, Moscow has come to look on Africa as the latest, most promising arena for reducing Western and enhancing Soviet influence." [Ref. 9: p. 1]

The conservative image of the structure of the international system is also one of polarization. The

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[1]See Graham Allison's Essence of Decision, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1971).

behavior of the two actors, however, is less extreme. This perception "concedes that responsiveness to the environment has some place in (the) behavior (of the Soviets)." [Ref. 6: p. 272]

For the conservative, then, "democracies do not always behave peaceably, nor Communist states aggressively." [Ref. 6: p. 273] Other categories of states are possible (such as neutrals and the underdeveloped) and begin to play independent roles. There are other forces at work, such as nationalism and the rise of technology.

> In consequence, threats to the desired future of peace and justice, while they are still seen to come primarily from Communist sources, no longer come exclusively from there. They come also from excessive ethnocentrism, from nuclear advance. The global condition is no longer a two-sided, total war to the finish between democracies and Communist states, open and closed societies. The relationship between these two groups is now a "limited adversary relationship." This relation changes--has changed and may change again; indeed the entire scene is in flux. And there are other conflicts in progress. [Ref. 6: p. 273]

However, the world is still seen as essentially a competition between the two major powers.

The conservative believes African conditions create opportunitiesfor Soviet advances, but recognizes that those conditions can impose some limitations on the Soviets as well as the West. Like the alarmist, the conservative perceives the institutional fragility of Africa as an invitation to Soviet meddling.

> As in Angola and Ethiopia, endemic African problems are likely to provide virtually endless new opportunities for future Soviet-Cuban involvement on the continent. Both of these states exposed the fragility of the national entities which replaced the colonial era--in Angola's case because of tribal and regional divisions which transcended the formation of a cohesive nation and state; in Ethiopia's similar divisions compounded by the presence of companion nationalities on the other side of Ethiopia's borders. The problem of tribal and regional divisions has also already involved major civil strife in Nigeria, the Sudan, Zaire, Burundi, and Cameroon, and lesser quarrels in other countries. [Ref. 9: p. 266]

The conservative believes that the Soviets understand that the African environment imposes some limitations. For instance, "while Soviet authors suggest that the lack of well defined social groups eases the way for radical takeovers in Africa, they see the same factor as a hinderance to early transformation of these regimes into Soviet-style states and as prime sources of possible reversals." [Ref. 9: p. 96]

The conservative also agrees that the economic limitations of the Soviet Union prevents communist exploitation of Africa's economic vulnerability. "The USSR evidently has neither the inclination nor the ability to assume a dominant economic role in any given African country as it has assumed in Cuba." [Ref. 9: p. 266]

C. THE LIBERAL IMAGE OF THE SOVIET THREAT

The liberal view of Soviet goals strongly discounts the existence of any coherent master plan. In contrast with the conservative, however, Soviet expansiveness is seen as more severely restricted. For example, William Welch argues that "Soviet aggression is an occasional, not a normal state of affairs, and it occurs not as an expression of an inherent drive on instinctive traits but as a reaction to what appear to be the menacing actions of environing states." [Ref. 6: p. 135]

The liberal image de-emphasizes the strategic importance of Africa. "Africa is geographically distant from the USSR and does not present immediate security concerns such as those that affect Soviet policy in the Middle East region." [Ref. 1: p. 35] However, liberals such as R. Craig Nation also recognize that "in rejecting grand design arguments one should not neglect the very real strategic concerns that do affect Soviet African engagement." [Ref. 1: p. 35]

Alarmists and conservatives believe Soviet expansion is unlimited and slightly limited, respectively. In contrast, some liberals believe many Soviet actions are a "simple response to a hostile environment (which) will disappear

with disappearance of that hostility." [Ref. 6: p. 135] While the Soviet Union is still seen as a threat to U.S. interests, in the liberal view that threat is less dire, grounded as it is in Soviet insecurity and traditional great power politics.

> Clearly the practice of Soviet policy in Africa cannot be explained or understood simply in terms of its professed commitment to international proletarian revolution; in fulfilling its new role as a superpower Soviet behavior is no different from that of any other major power whose priority concern is to pursue its own state interests. This is well understood in Africa, where the USSR is seen and treated not as the world leader of revolutionary internationalism, but as a power contesting for supremacy with the United States. [Ref. 11: p. 13]

Liberals believe the Soviets are expansionist, only in a more limited sense that either conservatives or alarmists. In their view, Soviet expansion is cautious, restrained, and uneven, often defensive, rather than offensive in nature. The main determinant of the character of Soviet policy is said to be the unique dynamics of each particular situation. For example, David Albright argues that there is no evident hierarchy of objectives in Soviet thinking and that "the bearing any particular objective has had on Soviet behavior has varied widely from place to place." [Ref. 12: p. 57]

According to this image, Soviet expansion is not a part of a coherent master plan to advance world communism or seize strategic advantages. Rather, the Soviets are simply reacting to situations that provide them with opportunities

to gain advantage or secure a defensive posture. How Soviet leaders interpret and respond to specific opportunities is determined by state/national interests.

Liberals agree that the Soviets are sometimes initiatory, but claim that the Soviets are primarily reactive. The liberal image holds that local conditions have been primarily responsible for drawing the Soviets into Africa. Albright has claimed that "one can best characterize recent policy in Africa as reactive and cautious." [Ref. 12: p. 58] Moreover, the Soviets are believed to clearly recognize their limitations and their methods of goal pursuance reflect this recognition.

> Expanded Soviet engagement in Africa has not led to a dramatic accumulation of influence, and as a result yet another reevaluation (of the Soviet threat) is in progress, emphasizing the limitations which Soviet policy confronts . . . . [Ref. 1: p. 27]

The ongoing Soviet reevaluation of Third World policy will emphasize a more cautious and limited method of implementation, according to the liberal view.

The liberal image of Soviet decision-making is not one of a rational actor or monolith, but one of a large bureaucratic organization, made up of competing groups which are forced to negotiate policy. Some proponents of this image conceive

> of the government as being composed of competing factions. Policy may be seen as emerging out of the interplay of that competition, or the (proponent) may

believe that there are at least groups within the opposing nation that would pursue different policies. [Ref. 10: p. 104]

Changes in Soviet policy, then, are very much affected by the internal dynamics of the bureaucracy. Conditions "on the ground" also play a large role in policy formulation. This image, in contrast to the conservative, sees Soviet involvement in Africa as having little to do with American action or inaction. While U.S. resolve may affect decision-making, it is certainly not the major agent of change in Soviet policy.

> One, and apparently the predominant, view is that no single sort of behavior or circumstance has proved consistently the most critical (in affecting Moscow's decision making). That is, the importance of individual kinds of behavior or circumstances has varied from case to case." [Ref. 13: p. 226]

Africa is not perceived by the liberals to be as strategically important as the conservatives and alarmists would claim. While certainly the continent is important to the Soviets, they have no hard strategic or economic interests there and the priority is therefore low.

Although liberal views differ radically,[2] a majority of liberals see the structure of the international system as

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[2]Contrast, for example, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nyes's Power and Interdependence, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1977) with Kenneth Waltz's Theories of International Politics, (Menlo Park: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979).

one of very loose bipolarity. While the U.S. and the Soviet Union are the major players, there is nothing within the structure of the international system which makes conflict inevitable. Like conservatives, liberals recognize a number of forces throughout the system. "Action in one direction or the other is not the product of a structure that can be readily marked, but the product of the contingencies of time, circumstance, and, indeed, accident." [Ref. 6: p. 271]

While the Communists do represent a threat, they certainly do not represent the only threat, and in many situations not even not the most serious threat. The liberals see the global condition as more varied and complex than the conservative. The Soviets are acting as a typical state; pursuing their own interests. The structure of the system does not bring the two major powers into conflict inevitably and they need not counter every move the other makes.

> Application (of policy) to the concrete situation depends on the contingencies of time and place, on a pragmatic assessment of particular circumstances. Such policy and action, while incumbent on all states, whatever their internal structure may be, are particularly so upon the great powers, upon whom especially the future rides. [Ref. 6: p. 272]

The liberal also perceives the structure of the international system as a limitation of Soviet influence.

> The Soviet Union is not a participant in major economic organizations such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, and thus can exert no influence through these bodies. Increasingly it is aware of and subjected to pressures associated with a Western-dominated economic system on which it depends for trade and credits. [Ref. 14: p. 8]

The liberal believes the nature of the African environment limits, more than assists, Soviet attempts to gain influence. "If Africa's weakness has facilitated great power meddling, its inherent strength and promise have also served to frustrate external actors in their search for permanent influence." [Ref. 15: p. 1] While the internal dynamics of Africa offer potential for involvement, the achievement of substantial gain is unlikely. "These dynamics have drawn the USSR almost inexorably into the maelstrom of African politics, but they also serve to delimit what the Soviets can hope to achieve." [Ref. 1: p. 48] Nationalism, tribalism, and other intricate components of the nature of Africa would prevent any lasting Soviet presence. For example, Cyrus Vance argued during a review of US African policy following the Cuban intervention in the Horn "that African nationalism was strong enough to preclude permanent Soviet domination." [Ref. 16: p. 91]

Liberals believe that Soviet limitations will prevent any substantial progress in the economic arena, noting, for example, that Angola and Mozambique are turning more frequently toward the West. The economic structure of Africa, then, only serves to highlight a weakness of the

Soviet Union, which certainly limits Communist influence on the continent.

Close examination of liberal perceptions reveals an interesting subcategory of this image: the confident liberal. A classic statement of confident liberalism is provided by Robert Price, who argues that the U.S. tends, mistakenly, to see radicalization of African governments as detrimental to U.S. interests.

> Radical political transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially when it occurs with substantial assistance from the Soviet Union, is usually viewed as dangerous to the United States in one or both of two ways--as a threat to certain tangible military and/or economic interests, and as a challenge to the credibility of U.S. power in the area, which if not met would weaken the position of the United States within the global system. Careful analysis of the context within which such radical transformations have occurred, or are occurring, reveals, however, that the calculation of these threats is based on assumptions that are no longer rooted in the facts of the real world. As such the "threats" are more myth than reality, and the policies developed to respond to them are dangerously "out of sync" with the environment in which they must operate. [Ref. 17: p. 59]

Price proceeds to demolish the geostrategic argument offered by Hanks and others, claiming, for example, that "the scenario of a blockade of Western shipping lanes (is) not only far-fetched but logically implausible." [Ref. 17: p. 60]

Price, Richard Feinberg, and other confident liberals recognize that the U.S. does have very real economic interests in Africa.

> These, however, are not threatened by radical transformation. Both the structure of the economic systems of African states and changes in the international economic system have led to a situation in which radical states are no less desirous than so-called moderate states of maintaining active trading relations with the West, and obtaining access to Western capital markets, managerial know-how, and technology. [Ref. 17: p. 60]

Feinberg agrees that the economic structure of the world places tremendous limitations on the ability of the Soviet Union to exert influence in the Third World. The Soviets simply cannot provide economic assistance comparable to the West. Soviet aid programs continue to lack flexibility and breadth, he notes, and the Soviets have resisted pressure for more economic aid from radical Third World states. [Ref. 18: p. 138]

> These trends in Soviet economic capabilities, philosophy, and behavior are making Moscow a less attractive patron to Third World states. The Soviet Union offers no solution to ballooning and chronic balance-of-payments deficits facing the developing nations. Soviet behavior with Allende and Manley suggests that Moscow would rather allow some friendly regimes to fall than to risk substantial economic resources. The disillusionment of regimes in Egypt, the Sudan, and Iraq with the Soviet Union was partly the result of their discovering that friendship with the Soviets was economically unrewarding; each has, to varying degrees, moved diplomatically away from Moscow. Moscow's inability to incorporate self-proclaimed Marxist regimes such as Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia into a socialist economic system will inevitably weaken Moscow's ability to dictate their foreign policies. [Ref. 18: p. 139]

The confident liberals also refute the essentially conservative notion that we must counter the Soviets in

Africa because of our concern for credibility; an idea which was championed by Henry Kissinger immediately after the Communists provided assistance to the MPLA in Angola. The problem, says the confident liberal, is that the U.S. defines situations as threatening to American credibility when in fact no real interests are at stake.

> A given Soviet move becomes a threat to U.S. "credibility" only when it is perceived by various audiences (the Soviets themselves, U.S. allies, the American public, etc.) as constituting a significant challenge to American interests, influence, desires, etc. When U.S. government spokesmen define Soviet moves in this manner, they contribute to such a perception. [Ref. 17: p. 60]

Two major points further define the confident liberal assessment of the Soviet threat. First, Soviet activity should not be confused with Soviet influence. "The purchase of Soviet weapons or hydroelectrical machinery does not signal alignment with Moscow . . . . This erroneous logic underestimates the severe problems that the Soviets have confronted in their Third World diplomacy." [Ref. 18: p. 131] Soviet influence in Africa has been grossly overestimated, claim the confident liberals. Price discounts the possibility of Soviet basing on the continent, claiming that in Africa nothing would symbolize subservience more forcefully than the establishment of a large, permanent military installation by a foreign state.

> The post-independence record of Angola and Mozambique should undermine any assumption that Soviet/Cuban-backed

> regimes will automatically become the hosts to substantial Soviet military bases. [Ref. 17: p. 8]

Secondly, while the confident liberals recognize that Soviet activity on the continent has increased, they conclude that "the odds are overwhelmingly against the establishment of any permanent presence in Africa." [Ref. 19] The Soviet limitations refered to earlier underscore "the extreme fragility of Soviet influence in African and Third World states." [Ref. 17: p. 9]

> Given the limited commitment to Marxism in most such states, their susceptibility to nationalism, and their considerable developmental difficulties, an overriding lesson of recent history would seem to be that the Soviet Union is unable to sustain its influence when it is challenged by the West on instrumental grounds--that is, in the provision of capital, technological assistance, access to export markets, and the like. [Ref. 17: p. 9]

The confident liberal, in summary, rejects the geostrategic argument and essentially claims that the U.S. has few tangible interests at stake in Africa, none of which is seriously threatened by the radicalization of African states. Soviet activity should not be confused with Soviet influence. The Soviet Union cannot hope to sustain a lasting, influential presence in Africa. Finally, the U.S. must recognize that its own role in Africa is limited.

> Let us recognize that our interests in Africa are limited, that our wisdom about Africa is even more limited, and that our power to decide the future of Africa is very limited indeed. Let us be extremely cautious about trying to settle African problems that Africans will, and must, settle for themselves. [Ref. 19]

The Soviet threat in Africa is, in the confident liberal image, extremely minor, and will remain so for quite some time.

IV. CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEVEL OF SOVIET INFLUENCE

Different images of the Soviet threat are more or less mutable, showing varying degrees of change over time in response to changing circumstances and events. Constancy or inconstancy is a direct function of the nature of the core components of the individual image. The alarmist sees the Soviet threat as very real and dangerous. On the other hand, confident liberals do not see the Soviet Union as a significant threat in Africa simply because the U.S. national interest is not sufficiently at stake. Conservatives and liberals agree that the level of Soviet influence in Africa can and does change, but disagree on the determinants of these changes.

A. THE ALARMIST

For the alarmist, the Soviet threat is ominous and constant. Events of the past ten years have produced little or no change in alarmist views of Soviet goals or methods. Alarmists saw Soviet actions in Angola and Ethiopia in the latter 1970's, for example, as reflecting a "broadening, deepening and hardening of the general pattern of Soviet aggressiveness." [Ref. 9: p. vii]

> Thus, there is a direct causative relationship between developments in Soviet African policies and other displays of Soviet aggressiveness that have so startled the world in recent times, including the invasion of

> Afghanistan and Moscow's strident support of Iran in the hostage crisis and its other conflicts with the U.S.; Moscow's threatening posture toward U.S. efforts to preserve its dwindling power in the Persian Gulf and even in the vast reaches of the Indian Ocean; the stationing of Soviet combat troops in Cuba. . . ; Moscow's welcoming of the Nicaraguan revolution. . . ; the partnership with Vietnam in the military occupation of Cambodia. [Ref. 9: p. vii]

The alarmists were initially heartened by the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Reagan

> stood without ambiguity for the view that the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was the central issue of our time; that in this struggle the United States had been falling behind while an expansionist Soviet Union was forging ahead; and that unless we made every effort to restore and assert our power, the future world would belong to the forces of totalitarian Communism. [Ref. 20: p. 25]

Due to the nature of the alarmist image of the Soviet threat, however, arguments soon began to appear in alarmist literature which played down Reagan's effectiveness against the Soviets. The threat was not being suppressed, but, in fact was continuing to grow.

For the alarmist this initial optimism was shortlived for two reasons. First, "the Reagan administration implicitly agreed with its opponents in interpreting the election not so much as a mandate for changing the foreign policy of the nation as for reforming the economy." [Ref. 20: p. 26] When Reagan's economic policy conflicted with the interests of his foreign policy, the former was favored. The grain deals and ineffective pipeline sanctions

underscored this lower priority. The administration had misunderstood a new, anti-Communist consensus for a mandate to economic reform. Secondly, this lower priority of foreign policy allowed apologist elements to mount opposition against attempts to counter the threat.

> The net result of this assignment to economic policy of a higher priority than foreign policy was the creation of a vacuum into which the opposition to the 1980 consensus was able to move. [Ref. 20: p. 27]

For the alarmist the election of Ronald Reagan was a glimmer of hope, but little has materialized in the way of concrete opposition to the rising Soviet threat. This development was inevitable due given the nature of the alarmist image of Soviet policy; an image that is relentlessly hyperbolic. American resolve is always seen lacking, resulting in a U.S. policy that for all practical purposes is simply a form of appeasement.

> It is here that we finally arrive at the juncture where pacifism and isolationism--the two great shapers of the opposition to the 1980 consensus--meet and merge into a single mighty wave of appeasement. [Ref. 20: p. 36]

The alarmist image of the Soviet threat is constant. The Soviets are seen as acting on the basis of a master plan designed to promote a Communist world order. This threat will be constant and pressing until it is defeated. There

can be no peaceful coexistence; conflict is inevitable. This image of the Soviet threat is constant because the nature of its components dictates constancy.

B. THE CONSERVATIVE

As explained earlier the conservative sees the Soviet Union as essentially expansionist, but somewhat constrained. While global considerations weigh heavily in Soviet calculations, local conditions are not ignored. The conservative sees Africa in general as strategically important to the U.S.[3] and therefore important to the Soviet Union, since a polarized international structure necessarily fosters competition. Soviet activity is viewed as opportunistic, but the Soviet Union does have certain predispositions and a number of unifying themes behind its involvement in Africa. Finally, Africa offers unique opportunities for Soviet inroads due to its tenuous structure, although this structure also promises some limitations.

The conservative acknowledges that Soviet influence in Africa is a function of many variables.

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[3]Note that the conservative, unlike the alarmist, does not see Africa as of utmost geostrategic importance to the U.S. Henry Kissinger noted, for example, that Angola was not vital to U.S. interests in and of itself, but it was the concern for American credibility which necessitated a show of action by the U.S. However, the conservative image is one which places considerably more emphasis on the strategic importance of Africa than the liberal perception.

The implications of Soviet activity in the Horn were clear in the conservative image. The Soviets must be countered or their appetite would grow.

> The United States had better prepare itself, militarily and psychologically, for the likelihood that Soviet and Cuban interventionism will start to affect U.S. interests far more directly that it does in the Horn of Africa. [Ref. 44]

Perhaps one of the most frightening aspects, in the conservative image, of Soviet involvement in Ethiopia was the effectiveness of the Soviets and the apparent potential for permanence of their influence in the region.

> When it comes to takeover of foreign lands outside Eastern Europe, Russia generally acts as though it were led by Woody Allen. In place after place, the Soviets poured in big assets and then goofed so badly they were expelled . . . But is that going to be the case here in Ethiopia?. . .The answer, for alot of reasons, is that the Russians cannot be counted upon to wither away here . . . they have not made--or at least they have minimized--the kind of mistakes that cost them so dearly in other countries. [Ref. 46]

The Soviet Union was seen as firmly entrenched in Ethiopia. The radical government apparently had no other option but to turn increasingly to the Soviets. "By every analysis, Mengistu had grown wholly dependent on Soviet, Cuban, and East German arms. Ethiopia had arguably become at least for the moment, the first real Soviet satellite in Africa." [Ref. 23: p. 203]

The conservatives saw the Soviet move into Ethiopia as a continuation of the upward trend in Soviet influence on

the continent. Again U.S. resolve was found to be lacking and American inaction directly resulted in opportunities for the Soviets.

2. Liberal

The liberal perception of the Soviet threat in Africa split into two basic positions with the Soviet-Cuban intervention into the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia. One liberal image, like the conservative, saw the influence of the Soviets continuing to rise, though this rise was seen again as a result of local conditions rather that U.S. actions or inaction. The second liberal camp perceived the Soviets to be overextended and ineffective, hence their influence had turned onto a downward trend.

In the first liberal image the Soviet presence in Ethiopia was a clear indication that Soviet influence was continuing to rise. Soviet activity was seen, however, as reactive and opportunistic. It was a combination of local conditions which provided the opportunity for the Soviet Union to enhance its position in Ethiopia. The drought and the heavy-handed policies of Haile Selassie prompted the overthrow of the Emperor and eased the way for the Soviets.

This image saw Soviet actions as serious, but its proponents, in keeping with the liberal perspective, would not support a confrontational policy. As Cyrus Vance said, "It was not that Soviet actions were unimportant, but I felt realism required us to deal with those problems in the local

context in which they had their roots." [Ref. 16: p. 84] For Vance, a confrontational American policy in this situation would again place the U.S. in a no-win situation where its credibility was not really at stake.

> By casting the complex Horn situation in East-West terms, and by setting impossible objectives for U.S. policy--elimination of Soviet and Cuban influence in Ethiopia--we were creating a perception that we were defeated . . .. [Ref. 16: p. 88]

By far the dominant liberal image of Soviet influence during this time, though, was the perception that the Soviets had overextended themselves and local conditions would soon lead to a Russian failure. This liberal camp, which leans toward the confident liberal image presented earlier, also noted that other developments on the continent were complicating the position of the USSR and slowly eroding Soviet influence.

This liberal image was confident the conditions in the Horn would place limitations on Soviet influence.

> The new Soviet connection must also be seen against Ethiopia's remarkable past success in protecting its independence by balancing off the ambitions of would-be colonial powers. Its special prestige in Africa rests on this record. If the threat of disintegration were overcome, any Ethiopian government might move to reduce dependence on Moscow. Colonel Mengistu already faces domestic opposition to his reliance on foreigners. [Ref. 47]

These liberals also pointed to developments throughout the continent which seemed to indicate that Soviet influence was declining.

> There has been talk of the new Soviet grip on the Horn of Africa. But in fact the Russians have been expelled from Egypt and the Sudan and also from Somalia--once their great hope for a major African base. Only in the unstable regime in Ethiopia do they seem to have a friend in the Horn, and they find Soviet arms in Eritrea and Somalia being used against other Soviet arms in Ethiopia. [Ref. 48]

The continued success of UNITA and the FNLA in Angola also refuted this "myth" of a Soviet grip on Africa, claimed the liberals. In August 1977 the Washington Post claimed that "UNITA exercises control over the Texas-sized countryside and enjoys broad popular support . . . ." [Ref. 49]

> So much for the "Soviet stronghold" that, in 1975, American officials claimed Angola would become if the Congress halted secret support for the anti-Neto forces, as it did. Without depending on the United States, and with his nationalist credentials perhaps enhanced for it, Mr. Savimbi has stayed in the field. And not only UNITA in the south but FNLA in the north gnaws at the government's territory and prestige. [Ref. 49]

The liberals also claimed that the Soviets had suffered a serious reversal in Somalia. "The expulsion of some 2,500 Soviet advisors and loss of base rights in Somalia in November 1977 represented another serious setback to the USSR's position in the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean." [Ref. 50: p. 61] The Soviet switch from Somalia to

Ethiopia was seen as a very risky move.

> By attempting to play both sides in Somalia and Ethiopia, the Russians lost the one without the assurance of gaining anything more than further expense and frustration in the other. The Soviet plan to wrap a whole group of states on either side of the Red Sea into a "socialist federation" crashed ignominiously on the double reef of conflicting Africa ethnic nationalisms and Arab and Western diplomacy. [Ref. 51]

In Mozambique the liberals saw another chink in Soviet armor. The Soviets consistently failed to provide adequate defensive hardware and/or troops to defend against Rhodesian attacks on guerilla forces retreating into Mozambique. This showed, in the liberal image, that the Soviet Union was not an effective patron "in the clutch."

> There is a lesson here for American policy-makers--one they seem well on the way to learning. We need not be panicked by every Soviet move on the African chessboard. Unquestionably, there are situations in which Moscow, by itself, or by Cuban proxy, can make a difference in a military situation. But Egypt and recently Somalia and now perhaps Mozambique have shown that the Russians, for their own reasons, do not shrink from letting a client down. [Ref. 52]

The liberals saw Soviet influence declining also as a simple result of overextension. As Jonathan Power observed in June 1978, "If Cuba insists on overcommitting itself and charging around fighting other peoples local wars, it will dig its own grave." [Ref. 53]

> The Cubans are already bogged down in Angola whether the C.I.A. helps anti-government movements or not. The Cubans in Ethiopia have already allied themselves with one of the cruelest regimes in Africa; if they go into

Eritrea, they will stumble into their own Vietnam. [Ref. 53]

The liberal image of the Soviet threat during this time was also driven by perceptions of Soviet bungling throughout Africa. While this was not to say that Soviet meddling was not serious and deserving of attention, the impression of Russian clumsiness did temper assessments of the Soviet threat.

> In any case, the Soviet involvement in the Horn of Africa has been notable so far for its ineptitude. After overarming Somalia, whose designs on Ethiopian-held territory were no secret, Moscow was unable to prevent the Somalis from using Soviet equipment against the new Soviet ally in Ethiopia. For their helping Ethiopia resist the attack, the Russians were expelled from Somalia. In Ethiopia, meanwhile, the Russians acquired some responsibility for an unpromising military situation in a most unstable political scene. To turn all this to offensive advantage would be quite a trick. [Ref. 47]

For the liberal, then, the period of expanding Soviet involvement in the Horn was perceived in two ways. The first camp saw Soviet influence growing as a result of exploitation of regional conditions. The second liberal camp also recognized an expanded Soviet presence but, paralleling in some ways the confident liberals discussed earlier, saw Soviet influence declining as a result of three factors: the USSR's inability to cope with the complex situations on the ground in Africa; basic Soviet ineptitude; and Soviet overextension beyond their capabilities.

B. ZAIRE

In March 1977 and again in May 1978 forces of Katangan opponents of President Mobutu Seko of Zaire launched incursions into the Shaba province (formerly Katanga) from Angola. Liberal and conservative observers agreed that these actions apparently occurred with the permission of Angolan President Neto and were supported by the Soviets and Cubans. ("U.S. government spokesmen in May 1978, including President Carter, charged that the USSR was the source for the weapons and the Cuban for the training of the intruding Katangese.") [Ref. 9: p. 51] There is, however, disagreement on how these actions affected the trend of Soviet influence in Africa. The liberals, again, were split into two camps: one saw the interventions as alarming and potentially increasing Soviet influence; the other viewed Soviet-Cuban complicity as embarrassing and damaging to Communist influence. The conservative image saw these actions as consistent with the goals of the USSR and as a boost to Soviet influence.

1. Conservative

Conservative perceptions of the Shaba incursions saw Soviet and Cuban involvement as consistent with Soviet planning. Soviet actions were not simply opportunistic, but well thought out. Rothenberg notes that "in the months before both incursions, Soviet and Angolan media appeared to be laying the groundwork for preemptive Angolan action against

Zaire." [Ref. 9: p. 51] In 1977 both Angolan and Soviet sources began to claim that dissident forces were entering Angola from Zaire. Before the second incursion in 1978 "Soviet media had carried dispatches about alleged plans or actions against Angola from Zaire." [Ref. 9: p. 53]

Again the conservatives saw the Communists' actions to be a result of Soviet perceptions that the U.S. would not confront them in Zaire.

> In calculating its risks, Moscow once more clearly counted heavily on a United States made gunshy by its defeat in Vietnam. As Moscow has seen things, post-Vietnam Units States was wary both of distant and of far-reaching military involvements, a combination applicable to all four post-Vietnam crises in Africa: Angola in 1975-76, the first incursion into Zaire in 1977, the Ethiopian-Somali war in 1977-78, and the second incursion into Zaire in 1978. [Ref. 9: p. 56]

The inability of the U.S. to prepare and execute an effective response to Soviet action again was seen as dangerous. The failure of American resolve contributed directly to Soviet actions and could lead to future activity.

> That helplessness shows that the impact of the Vietnam war, followed by the C.I.A. investigations, traumatize Congress today as they did during the 1975 Angolan civil war. Congress remains transfixed with fear that U.S. aid will lead to military intervention, and is still unwilling to use the undercover C.I.A. options. So, there is no effective response to the invasion of Zaire . . . This may well (have) agonizing results. [Ref. 54]

U.S. aid to the French and Belgians in transporting their troops to Zaire was clearly viewed as a step in the

right direction by the conservatives. But Soviet actions in Zaire led conservative observers to conclude that the Shaba incursions were another indication that a lack of U.S. resolve had prompted a further, more dangerous willingness on the part of the Soviets to act in Africa. This willingness translated directly into rising influence.

2. Liberal

The liberal camp, as described earlier, was split into two factions over the issue of the Shaba incursions. The first saw Soviet influence rising because t he situation was again placed in an East-West context. Local conditions were providing opportunities for the Soviets. The second faction saw Soviet influence declining because Moscow's complicity in Shaba embarrassed the USSR throughout the Third World.

The first liberal faction recognized that the U.S. had tangible economic interests in Zaire. However, the tendency of the U.S. government to overestimate Soviet capability to threaten those interests, said these liberals, led to an overall perception of American weakness (and therefore Soviet strength). The U.S. "precipitated the usual windy castigation of the Soviet Union and Cuba, which serves only to expose our own weakness." [Ref. 55]

Again this liberal position saw placing the situation in an East-West context as damaging to the U.S. and potentially helpful for the Soviets. Cyrus Vance

reflected in his memoirs

> I wanted the crisis resolved before it provided an opportunity for Soviet or Cuban meddling in Zaire, which could turn the affair into an East-West "test of strength." The Soviets and Cubans present in Angola would hold most of the cards in that case . . . . The strategy I urged to contain the incursion and restore political stability was to deal with the Shaba invasion as an African--not an East-West--problem. [Ref. 16: p. 70]

The second liberal faction saw Soviet-Cuban actions in Zaire as damaging to overall influence on the continent. This image also recognized tangible U.S. interests in Zaire and saw them as being threatened. More importantly, though, Cuban complicity was severely damaging to Communist influence.

> It would be useful . . . to establish the extent of the Cuban connection with the Shaba rebellion, if only to destroy the Cubans' pretense that they merely serve the cause of territorial cohesion at the request of legally constituted African governments. Their imminent betrayal of their former friends in Eritrea would also demonstrate that the Cubans have become puppets of the Russians. [Ref. 56]

C. FROM RHODESIA TO ZIMBABWE

The Lancaster House negotiations which led to the independence of Zimbabwe marked a convergence of the liberal consensus concerning the Soviet threat in Africa. This event was seen as a clear American foreign policy victory and a severe setback for the Soviet Union. Conservatives, on the other hand, looked upon the agreement with skepticism and, fearing that political instability would be an

inevitable feature of black rule, predicted that the Soviets would make substantial gains in Zimbabwe.

1. Conservatives

The situation in Zimbabwe, both before and after independence, was seen by the conservatives as providing tremendous opportunities for the Soviets. The ability of the Soviets to make progress in cementing ties with the Front Line states and their support of Joshua Nkomo led the conservatives to agree that Soviet influence in the region was rising, despite the ultimately peaceful resolution of the independence question.

The conservatives saw earlier gains on the continent as stimulating the Soviets to press southward. "In the aftermath of its triumphs in both Angola and Ethiopia, Moscow set its sights on the ultimate three targets of southern Africa: Rhodesia, Namibia, and the Republic of South Africa." [Ref. 9: p. 163]

The harsh tone of statements from Moscow concerning the white government in Rhodesia convinced the conservatives that the Soviets were determined to destabilize the whole of southern Africa. Morris Rothenberg has noted that Pravda 's assessment was that the Soviet government favored

> liquidation of the racist regime in Rhodesia and the handing over of full power to Zimbabwe in the person of the Patriotic Front, for the immediate and full withdrawal of the Republic of South Africa from Namibia and the handing over of power to SWAPO, the genuine representative of the people of its country, for the liquidation of the system of apartheid in the Republic

of South Africa. [Ref. 9: pp. 176-77]

The refusal of the U.S. to support the "stabilizing" Ian Smith regime in Rhodesia, then, was contributing to the further success of the Soviets in Africa.

The conservatives pointed to evidence that the Soviet Union was committed to a violent solution to the Rhodesian problem.

> To sharpen the West's dilemmas and to maximize its own leverage, Moscow has consistently emphasized that the situation in Rhodesia can only be resolved by violence. This stance has gone hand in hand with the Soviet stress on the need for total capitulation of the Smith regime and insistence that the Patriotic Front is the only true representative of the people of Rhodesia. The point made from time to time is that the Front had nothing against negotiations and a peaceful settlement is always balanced by the charge that Smith's negotiating position and his military actions can only be met by military actions on the part of the Front. Whenever negotiations of any sort were going on whether between Smith and African leaders or between the Western powers and the parties, Moscow strongly emphasized that only armed struggle could bring the desired results. [Ref. 9: p. 178]

This conservative image also pointed to the apparent Soviet successes in gaining influence with the Front Line states of Tanzania, Zambia, and Mozambique as potentially dangerous is the Rhodesian situation. President Nyrere of Tanzania dropped all support of UNITA following the MPLA "victory" and supported the Soviet-Cuban intervention into Angola. Zambian President Kaunda dropped his opposition to Soviet involvement in Angola very early on, agreeing with the OAU decision to recognize the Neto regime in February

1976 and establishing normal relations in April. The Soviets were also successful in establishing close ties with Samora Machel of Mozambique. Soviet President President Podgorny and Fidel made trips to these countries following the breakdown of British efforts to negotiate a settlement on Rhodesia in Geneva in February of 1977. These trips, say the conservatives, were highly successful.

> A major theme in joint statements signed in all these countries was the alleged armed provocations and "aggressions" against the front-line states by Rhodesia and South Africa, charges presumably justifying both Soviet military aid and armed incursions into Rhodesia, Namibia, and South Africa from their neighbors. [Ref. 9: p. 183]

The conservative would agree that the ability of the U.S. and others to arrive at a peaceful solution to the Zimbabwean independence question was a disappointment to the Soviets. However, they would argue, the Soviets were confident (as were they themselves) that this solution would not be a lasting one. Even if the agreement did endure, though, "Moscow probably expected it would retain considerable leverage by cashing in on its previous ties to the Patriotic Front, and particularly to the Nkomo faction. [Ref. 9: p. 198]

2. Liberal

As stated earlier, developments in Rhodesia brought the liberals once again into a single mind on the question of the trend of Soviet influence. There was unanimous agreement that the situation was a major victory for the West.

> In 1979 and 1980 Soviet policy received an unexpected blow. Developments in Zimbabwe proved, once again, that Soviet and allied military supplies and training do not create political puppets. In the Lancaster House negotiations leading to Zimbabwean independence, both Joshua Nkomo (whose ZIPRA forces had received the bulk of Soviet support) and ZANU's Robert Mugabe followed their own interests and excluded the Soviets from any effective direct role. And, whereas the Soviet expectation had been that a Zimbabwe "of socialist orientation" would create an entire Soviet-linked zone across southern Africa, the Mugabe-led government that resulted from the 1980 election held off for almost a year before establishing diplomatic ties with Moscow and has demonstrated a clear preference for Western and Chinese political and economic links. [Ref. 57: p. 108]

Even prior to the actual independence of Zimbabwe many liberals believed that Soviet influence in the region had ebbed. While some believed that a failure to reach a settlement would lead to Cuban intervention in support of the Patriotic Front against the Salisbury government, the majority concluded that the Soviet-backed Cubans had already overextended themselves. George Ball observed that

> such direct Cuban intervention seems to me unlikely. Cuban troops are already thinly spread over Africa and are still suffering losses in Angola. And Cuba faces an awkward choice in Ethiopia where it is being pressed for help against Eritrean separatists--an action that would make a mockery of its commitment to national liberation

> movements . . . . Thus Cuba seems unlikely to risk substantial forces in the Rhodesian struggle . . . . Nor could it expect direct Soviet military help . . .. [Ref. 58]

These liberals believed that settlement in Rhodesia would "all but foreclose a direct Cuban-Soviet involvement and an ever-wider war in southern Africa." [Ref. 59]

The actual independence of Zimbabwe, then, was a major Western victory and a setback for the Soviets. Andrew Young noted that "with the independence of Zimbabwe, U.S. policy toward Africa registered and important achievement and a new period in African-American relations began." [Ref. 60: p. 648]

> The Zimbabwe settlement must also be recognized as a victory of the Western alliance in cooperation with the OAU. It signaled a renewal of the cooperation in decolonization which came under Western leadership and via the United Nations during the 1950s and 1960s. And it curtailed at least temporarily the trend toward growing dependence on Soviet military aid to bring about African liberation. [Ref. 60: p. 648]

Following independence the Soviet Union was unable to exert any substantial influence. Relations remained at a low level and trade was insignificant.

> In the three years since independence it has become abundantly clear that, far from benefiting from its support for Nkomo and ZAPU, the Soviet Union has little if any influence in Zimbabwe, and in fact has had to bear the stigma of backing ZAPU, somewhat as the Ancient Mariner had the Albatross hung around his neck. Relations have certainly improved over the three years

> of independence, but they are far from close. Although he has indicated his intention to do so, Robert Mugabe has yet to visit Moscow, and no high-ranking Soviet delegations have appeared in Harare. [Ref. 61: p. 195]

For the liberal, it is highly unlikely that the Soviet Union will be able to foster ties with Zimbabwe that are similar to the USSR's relationship with Mozambique or Angola. The Soviets have little influence with the Mugabe government. The success of the Lancaster House negotiations represented a serious setback to Soviet influence in the region and brought about a liberal consensus which perceived a downward trend in overall Soviet influence in Africa.

D. AFGHANISTAN

Following close on the heels of the developments which would blossom into the Lancaster House negotiations and the independence of Zimbabwe was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Liberals perceived Moscow's actions to be damaging to Soviet influence throughout the Third World. The conservatives saw yet another example of the failure of the U.S. government to take firm actions to counter the rising Soviet threat.

1. Conservatives

The conservatives again saw the invasion of Afghanistan to be a logical extension of Soviet expansion following their successes in Africa.

> In the Horn of Africa the Russians have recently scored two big gains and set the stage for a third . . . . The

big new push forward came in Afghanistan. [Ref. 62]

Jiri Valenta notes that Soviet actions in Afghanistan are similar to the interventions in Angola and Ethiopia "in that the invasion was a dramatic show of Soviet strength in a Third World country." [Ref. 63: p. 18] The significant difference, he continues, is that in Afghanistan the Soviets deployed their own combat troops. This invasion "reemphasized the Soviet's immense military airlift capability and their ability to mobilize significant numbers of troops in a short time." [Ref. 63: p. 18]

Vernon Aspaturian claims that "the Soviet move in Afghanistan must be linked with earlier and continuing Soviet/Cuban moves in Africa." [Ref. 63: p. 49] Soviet gains were "probably more the product of U.S. unwillingness to support its local clients than of the Kremlin's political diplomatic engineerings." [Ref. 63: p. 49] The conservative image again sees the failure of the U.S. to make Soviet adventurism costly as the primary determinant of Moscow's course of action. For the conservative "the lesson is that unchallenged the Soviets may enact this scenario elsewhere." [Ref. 63: p. 18] Valenta concluded that

> The U.S. reaction to the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, Angola, and Ethiopia was intense but brief, failing to have long-term or significant impact on U.S.-Soviet relations. If the reaction to Afghanistan's invasion is no different, those in the Soviet leadership who advocate military solutions to future conflicts will be encouraged. [Ref. 63: p. 19]

Aspaturian mirrors this conclusion.

> The success of the Soviet move into Afghanistan without a strong U.S. response about future Soviet military action threatens to create a new dynamic with a momentum of its own that may excite irresistible temptations for the Soviet leadership. [Ref. 63: p. 45]

The U.S. must, in this perception, act decisively to prevent further advances.

> So the President has to start doing something. Even those of us who have been most keen for detente must now see that unless given some strong warning, the Russians will talk themselves into the most dangerous of all positions: the self-intoxicating position of believing that they can get away with anything. [Ref. 62]

Perhaps the most striking difference between the conservative and liberal assessments of the developments in Afghanistan was the predicted reaction of other Third World nations. While the liberal image, as will be shown, saw the invasion as harmful to Soviet credibility, the conservative concluded that U.S. credibility had been severely damaged by American inaction. The conservative concern was that

> America's allies and client states as well as countries in the Third World and elsewhere may draw similar conclusions about U.S. intentions and may hesitate to follow, much less move ahead, of the American lead if they see the possibility of being abandoned once the United States decides to resume normal relations with the Soviet Union. [Ref. 63: p. 31]

2. Liberal

Liberals saw the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as very damaging to Soviet credibility and as a severe blow to Moscow's ability to exert influence in the Third World.

From the liberal perspective the "Soviet move into Afghanistan came as a surprise to most American observers." [Ref. 63: p. 56] There was no step-by-step plan to achieve hegemony over Southwest Asia; the Soviets were simply able to exploit local conditions. "If this operation had been part of a broader design, Moscow would have invented a more clever scenario and would have chosen a better time of year to invade." [Ref. 63: p. 65]

While Moscow probably did not expect the U.S. to become seriously involved, U.S. resolve was not a primary consideration in Soviet calculations. In fact, from the liberal perspective the Soviets were in a sense reacting out of fear.

> It is important to remember the historical function of the encirclement formula in the Stalin era: it signaled a hostile world abroad, the need for belt-tightening and vigilance at home, and an assumption of likely conflict ahead. Nikita Kruschev proudly jettisoned the slogan of a hostile encirclement in 1957 . . . . In 1978-79 it returned . . . . Given the perspective of a quadripartite (U.S., China, Japan, and NATO Europe) encirclement of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan provided an (admittedly limited) opportunity to break out in the only direction not covered by the four anti-Soviet partners. [Ref. 63: p. 62]

The Soviet actions in Afghanistan were seen by the liberal camp as very costly to Moscow.

> In Afghanistan, the Soviets have ended up with a Vietnam of their own: The more they pour in, the more they lose. The Moscow-backed government appears to be on its last legs, as anti-communist forces occupy 23 of the country's 28 provinces. The Russians have lost a costly gamble. [Ref. 64]

The liberals also saw the Soviet invasion as a strain on Moscow's relations with other communist states.

> The Afghan developments, as well as the exile of Sakharov to Gorki, intensified tensions between the Soviet and other communist parties and states. The reaction of the Spanish and Italian communists was predictable; the Rumanians were perhaps more outspoken than Moscow had expected; behind the scenes others, including the Poles, apparently were far from happy; and the Cubans seemed understandably embarrassed. [Ref. 63: p. 67]

As stated earlier, the most significant difference in conservative and liberal assessments of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is the interpretation of its affect on Third World nations. For the liberal, Moscow's actions obviously alienated the majority of Third World states and therefore the intervention was a serious blow to Soviet influence.

> Hostility in the Third World is a reaction that does concern Moscow. The vote in the United Nations General Assembly condemning the invasion and the remarkable consensus at the conference of Islamic states in Islamabad cannot but have surprised Soviet specialists, who had the Muslim world safely lined up on their side against the United States. Some Soviet advocates of the Afghan invasion are undoubtedly prepared to write this off as a necessary price--part of the tradeoffs to be

> weighed against the presumed costs of not having moved--but others are sure to point to the broken dishes in the Soviet cupboard of Third World policies as an unnecessarily heavy price for the Afghan expeditions. [Ref. 63: pp. 67-68]

In the liberal perception

> the invasion of Afghanistan confirmed what a majority of Third World countries had long suspected, if they had not said it out loud before. The Soviet Union is a superpower that has no hesitation in defining its own security in a way that can threaten the security of its neighbors. In Afghanistan it was no longer a force in support of national liberation but against it. [Ref. 34: p. 249]

E. THE ELECTION OF REAGAN

The election of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States marked a crucial turning point in American perceptions of the Soviet threat. The conservative image, which was grounded in notions of American resolve, saw the Reagan pre-election rhetoric as a clear indication that the U.S. would now begin to take concrete steps to reverse the rising trend of Soviet influence. The liberals were again divided. One group saw a "cowboy" Reagan who would revive jingoism and complicate local realities with East-West overtones. This would provide more opportunities and "justification" for Soviet involvement in Africa. A second, smaller group leaned toward the confident liberals and concluded that Reagan would have little effect on the trends of Soviet influence; regional realities were so dominant that Reagan would neither help nor hinder the Soviets. In

this view these regional realities would continue to work against Moscow. Further, there were limitations on Reagan policy which were inherent in the American system; limitations which would pull U.S. policy toward a middle-ground position.

1. Conservatives

For the conservative the election of Ronald Reagan meant a downturn in Soviet influence. Reagan implied that a more aggressive U.S. foreign policy was forthcoming. Since the basis of the conservative assessment of the Soviet threat is U.S. resolve, the inauguration of Reagan signaled that a change in the level of Moscow's influence was imminent.

> The American people elected Reagan overwhelmingly because they believed he would be able to establish a more influential and decisive U.S. foreign policy. Thus the opportunity for positive change is there. [Ref. 65: p. 28]

Countering the Soviet threat would require that the U.S. once again adopt a more confrontational stance and develop the power to contain Soviet expansion. "In electing Ronald Reagan . . . the American people announced they were willing--nay, eager--to begin moving in this direction." [Ref. 66: p. 25]

It is interesting that even in this time of rising conservative optimism, discussions of the Soviet threat still reflect a great deal of suspicion and caution. The

very nature of the conservative image dictates this. Soviet leadership is still seen as purposeful and strong.

> Some Western leaders may have lost their nerve; in the Soviet leadership there is no room for hesitation and world weariness. [Ref. 67: p. 20]

The Soviet Union is still seen as expansive, despite new U.S. resolve, due to the nature of the communist system. The Soviet system

> drives the Soviet leadership to expand its sphere of influence wherever opportunities arise. It is perfectly true that this drive is not as strong as it once was, and that it does not lead the Soviets into adventures except by miscalculation. If the drive continues, it is not because the Russians are so strong, but because the West, disunited and confused, is even weaker. [Ref. 67: p. 21]

The Soviet system, then, "will tend to expand through its own momentum unless faced with determined resistance. [Ref. 68: p. 37]

In the conservative perception, the Reagan administration was keenly aware of the nature of the threat and the American responses necessary to meet this threat: to restore the military balance; to contain Soviet expansion and reverse it; to negotiate only from a position of genuine strength; and, above all, to dispel the psychological lethargy of America and its allies in dealing with the Soviet Union. [Ref. 69: p. 527]

Unlike the liberals, who claimed Reagan's harsh rhetoric would spur the Soviets, the conservatives claimed

that this show of resolve, backed by concrete action, would block Soviet influence.

> The problem as so far as the Soviet Union is concerned, then, is not Reagan's "aggressive language" but America's power. [Ref. 67: p. 21]

For the conservative, a lack of U.S. resolve led to Soviet gains in the Third World. A failure to take decisive steps to limit Moscow eroded U.S. credibility. "Action and inaction contributed to a perceived U.S. unwillingness to engage its power to protect its vital interests around the globe." [Ref. 65: p. 33] The election of Ronald Reagan reversed this trend. In 1981 the Soviet Union faced a new administration which no longer was weakened by the post-Vietnam trauma; an administration which was willing and able to bring about a normalization of relations with Moscow from a position of strength. [Ref. 68] Although Reagan did represent a downward trend in Soviet influence, the nature of the conservative image of the Soviet threat dictated that the U.S. remain on its guard.

> The temptation for the Soviet Union to take advantage of a critical situation might be reduced if the Russians knew that any such attempt on their part would be countered by an American move at a place inconvenient to the USSR . . . From a position of equal strength and resolution it may be possible to reach wide agreement with (the Soviets); from a position of inferiority--nothing at all. [Ref. 68: p. 41]

2. Liberal

The majority of liberals saw the election of Ronald Reagan as a dangerous step back into the cold war. Those interested in Africa feared that developments would again be placed in an East-West context, blurring reality and nurturing situations where Soviet influence could thrive. The Reagan administration's policy toward southern Africa raised two major concerns for the liberal camp. First, there was a danger that the U.S. would be too closely identified with the Republic of South Africa, damaging American relations with other African states.

> The U.S. determination to link up with South Africa in its efforts to destabilize the government (of Angola) could extract a heavy price in terms of its relations with the rest of the world, and particularly with the rest of black Africa . . . . [Ref. 70]

Seth Singleton noted that a poor relationship between the U.S. and African nations is precisely what the Soviets require to cultivate their influence.

> Soviet influence is clearly tied to the degree of dissension between Africans and the West. Without polarization and continuing armed conflict in the region, the Soviet Union's political appeal and utility as an arms supplier and protector withers away. Soviet operators can take advantage of African disenchantment with the West but cannot force the pace. They count on the imperialists to dig their own graves. [Ref. 57: p. 120]

The second major concern the liberals had was that the U.S. position could be interpreted by the South Africans

themselves as support for a more aggressive RSA stance.

> The United States must avoid the trap of being provoked into support for an aggressively hegemonic South African regional policy that furthers the Soviet goal of being perceived as the primary ally and protector of African interests. [Ref. 57: p. 121]

Jonathan Steele agreed that Reagan's election sent a disruptive signal to the South Africans.

> . . . Reagan's victory in the 1980 presidential election in the United States prompted a new aggressiveness in South African policy toward the front-line states. It stepped up its ground and air attacks into southern Angola up to two hundred miles north of the Namibian border. In Mozambique, besides arming and equipping an antigovernment guerilla movement, which operated mainly in the northwest of the country, it sent commandoes on a mission against ANC representatives in Maputo . . . . [Ref. 34: p. 239]

A confrontational policy, say the liberals, can only cause more tension and increase the risk of conflict. "An approach, in fact, that leads to more frequent and more violent confrontations, postponing the process of a negotiated solution, runs a far greater risk of perpetrating and strengthening the very presences that Washington seeks to eliminate." [Ref. 71] The Reagan policy provides "justification" for Soviet presence and places the U.S. in an awkward situation.

> Buoyed by the perceived tilt toward South Africa in the Reagan administration's policy of "constructive engagement" . . . Soviet and other communist states are once again becoming more confident in tone and content. South African occupation of territory in southern Angola has provided new justification for the continued

> presence in that country of Cuban troops . . . . Since 1980 the Soviets have engaged in a worldwide campaign to dispel the imporession that they are the militarist and imperialist superpower and to pin that onus on the United States. Despite Afghanistan, this campaign has been increasingly successful in Europe and Africa. [Ref. 57: p. 120]

For many liberals, then, Reagan's apparently single-minded anti-communism was dangerous and offered tremendous potential for creating an even worse situation for the U.S. in Africa.

> Unfortunately, the Reagan administration is so enamored of a chance to fight communism--even if it means linking up with South Africa--that it is ignoring the practical damage repeal would do, even to its own anti-communist interests. [Ref. 70]

Finally, there was also a liberal faction which saw the Reagan election as disturbing, but believed that Reagan would have little actual impact for one of two reasons. The first, which draws heavily on the confident liberal argument, said that regional conditions were such that the Soviets would be drawn down despite the opportunities Reagan's confrontational stance provided. The second believed that Reagan's rhetoric could not be followed by a policy which could significantly threaten U.S. interests. Cyrus Vance claimed that the dynamics of the American policy prevented the implementation of extreme policies. Referring to a discussion with Andrei Gromyko, Vance said

> I had urged Gromyko not to draw premature conclusions about the direction of American foreign policy from the

confrontational posture of the Reagan administration because there were strong currents of pragmatism at work that propelled us to the broad middle of the stream, away from the extremes of Right and Left. I hoped these forces could draw President Reagan and his advisors from their preoccupation with ideology and confrontation toward the main lines of postwar American foreign policy generally followed by all presidents from Truman to Carter. [Ref. 16: p. 21]

VII. THE DEBATE CONVERGES: THE DECLINE IN SOVIET INFLUENCE

There was no specific instance which led to a convergence of the conservative and liberal threat assessments, but representative literature does indicate that somewhere in 1982-83 there was general agreement that Soviet influence was declining.

The liberal arguments focused mainly on local conditions and regional developments as limitations on Soviet activities. The conservatives continued to point to the success of the confrontational posture of the Reagan administration, citing, for example, the invasion of Grenada as firm evidence of the reassertion of American resolve.

A. GRENADA

The United States, along with the Eastern Caribbean states, invaded the island of Grenada in October 1983, following the execution of self-proclaimed Marxist Prime Minister Maurice Bishop by a rival. Conservatives hailed this action as a victory over Soviet influence. While the liberals continued to see Soviet influence declining, they were doubtful that the Grenada invasion was a major factor in this trend; many in fact saw this military action as a potential danger to U.S. interests in the Third World.

1. Conservative

For the conservative, Soviet and Cuban involvement in Grenada was not essentially the result of opportunities created by local conditions. Richard Pipes, for example, recognized that certain conditions, such as poverty, were problems. However, he said, "I do not deny that poverty is a problem in 90 percent of the world, but the real problem is the Soviet Union." [Ref. 24: p. 82] The conservatives perceived developments in Grenada to be

> proof that the Soviet Union is the prime mover of revolution in this area, and that the real problems are not social, economic, or even historic, but the result of a foreign power bent on isolating the United States and exploiting identifiable instabilities and animosities to create regimes hostile and dangerous to American interests. [Ref. 24: p. 82]

The downward trend in Soviet influence was, in the conservative view, being driven by American resolve and Grenada clearly indicated Reagan's success. Carol Saivetz and Sylvia Woodly concluded that "President Reagan's harsh rhetoric and the invasion of Grenada seem to have made the USSR wary of new provocative adventures." [Ref. 72: p. 213] Grenada was another example of the reassertion of American resolve.

> The final message of Grenada is that after the wrenching decade of the Vietnam era, the American people are again prepared to support a vigorous foreign policy that protects and underscores American interests throughout the world. [Ref. 24: p. 311]

The Wall Street Journal claimed in November 1983 that "whatever the defeatist habits of the foreign policy establishment, the public response to Grenada shows that the American people are ready to start winning again." [Ref. 73]

For the conservative, then, the invasion of Grenada meant that the Soviets would have to be more cautious in their adventures.

> In the end, the Soviets were "burnt" once again in Grenada, and as a consequence, they are apt to be even more careful in committing themselves in similar situations, just as other socialist-oriented countries may have lessened confidence in repeated Soviet assurances that imperialism cannot reverse the historical process. [Ref. 24: p. 105]

The U.S.'s ability to successfully counter the Soviets on the rim of the Caribbean represented a serious blow to Moscow's interpretation of the "correlation of forces." Vernon Aspaturian observed that "socialist leaders who previously experienced optimism with regard to favorable shifts in the correlation of forces can only feel pessimistic because of the post-Grenada shift." [Ref. 24: p. 109]

For the conservative, Grenada had a tremendous impact on the perceptions of Third World leaders, especially those who were radical and had ties to the Soviets.

> The intervention indicated that Soviet allies outside the immediate Soviet sphere of influence were not automatically assured of Moscow's protection, even when

faced with a mortal challenge from imperialism. These are troubling implications for Nicaragua, Angola, Ethiopia, and even Cuba. [Ref. 24: pp. 413-414]

2. Liberal

From the liberal viewpoint Grenada offered potential for Soviet gains. The invasion was a lesser success than the conservatives would claim: it was not a clear signal to the Soviets; it was not likely to deter the Soviets in Africa; and it could actually encourage instability on the continent, perhaps strengthening the Soviets' Third World ties. Fortunately, say the liberals, local conditions were such that Moscow's influence would continue to decline in Africa, despite the dangers that Reagan's policies presented.

The liberals clearly saw the invasion of Grenada as a lesser success than did the conservatives. The importance of Grenada was exaggerated by U.S. political leaders because of "the highly competitive and partisan nature of (the American) political system." [Ref. 24: p. 282]

The liberals also saw the invasion as a reaction to a specific set of circumstances rather than as a message to Moscow. Michael Clough has noted that "in a news conference on the first day of the operation, Secretary Schultz emphatically denied that the action was intended as a signal to the Soviets or Cubans." [Ref. 24: p. 284]

The invasion could also have a destabilizing effect in Africa, said the liberals. The invasion, they claimed,

could be viewed positively by the anti-communist movements, such as UNITA in Angola and Renamo in Mozambique. This could heighten tensions and, again, provide continued justification for Soviet and Cuban presence. Clough further offers that the Soviets might be forced to adopt a more hard-line stance in Africa out of concern for Moscow's credibility.

> . . . Soviet leaders are at least as concerned as their American counterparts with projecting an image of resolve. Consequently, a predictable Soviet response to Grenada might be to seek opportunities that would repair the damage done to the credibility of their position in the Third World. Paradoxically, the likelihood of such a response is increased by repeated American claims that Grenada represented a major defeat for the Soviet Union. [Ref. 24: p. 286]

Finally, the liberals claimed that the invasion had the potential for actually strengthening Soviet-Third World ties.

> If states like Ethiopia and Libya believe that Washington is irreversably committed to their demise (as conservative rhetoric concerning the principles involved in the Grenada intervention suggests), their only option is to prepare for the eventual confrontation. Inevitably, this will lead to closer military relations with the only other big power in the neighborhood--the Soviet Union. [Ref. 24: p. 290]

Fortunately, claim the liberals, the local realities in Africa were such that the potential for disaster offered by the Grenada invasion would not be realized. The Soviets' influence would continue to decline because of regional realities.

Seth Singleton noted in 1984 that the Soviets simply were unable to provide African friends with the economic help which would be required to prevent Western inroads.

> What the Soviets and their allies have been neither able nor inclined to provide, even to Mozambique and Angola, is effective help in rebuilding and developing the region's war-ravaged economies. Angola's budget is heavily dependent on oil exports to the United States, and Mozambique's major source of revenue is South Africa. The Soviets import almost nothing from southern Africa and export very little to the region apart from arms. [Ref. 57: p. 110]

There is no indication, say the liberals, that the ideological commitment of African allies to the Soviet Union has grown. "Angolan and Mozambican policies are more rather than less pragmatic and self-interested after nearly nine postindependence years of close association with the Soviet Union and its allies." [Ref. 57: p. 111]

> Both countries actively seek European trade and investment, maintain close relations with non-Marxist Front Line states, play key roles in the continental OAU and the regional Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), (and) have been receptive to the efforts of the U.S. and other members of the five-nation Western "Contact Group" . . . . [Ref. 57: p. 111]

Further, local conditions are working against the Soviets in the form of anti-communist and secessionist movements. UNITA continues to pester the Soviet-backed MPLA. In Ethiopia, the Soviets have been unable to contain the several nationalist movements. Richard Sherman noted that

> in spite of considerable Soviet and Cuban military aid, the Ethiopian government has been unable to defeat or even contain a number of nationalist movements within its territory, thus jeopardizing an effective, long-term Soviet presence there. The stalemate between Government and guerillas undermines the Russian's image as a strong, decisive actor in Africa. [Ref. 74]

During this period, then, following Reagan's election and through the invasion of Grenada, both liberals and conservatives continued to see Soviet influence decline. The conservatives perceived this decline to be a direct function of renewed U.S. resolve, as embodied in the Grenada intervention. The liberals saw Grenada as potentially harmful, but believed that African realities continued to hamper the Soviets on the continent.

B. THE ACCORDS OF LUSAKA AND NKOMATI

The conservative and liberal positions appeared to converge even more closely with the developments surrounding the non-aggression agreements between South Africa and Mozambique and Angola. The two camps agreed that these agreements represented a blow to Soviet influence.

For the conservative the non-aggression pacts presented a clear dilemma. On one hand the accords were seen as an obvious victory of the Reagan policy. At the same time there were arguments that these developments were a signal that accommodation with pro-Soviet regimes would endanger anti-communist elements in Africa.

> The rapid rapprochement scrambled the chessboard in southern Africa, and raised concern over whether the anti-communist faction in Angola's civil war--UNITA--and a similar group in Mozambique--MNR--were about to be jettisoned by their Western friends. [Ref. 75]

These conservatives saw Reagan policy as simply too soft. The accords, then, were an invitation to disaster.

> The peace the Reagan administration has in mind for the African nations of Angola and Namibia is one that, at least as presented, surpasseth all understanding. As we perceive matters, it would leave Angola with a Marxist government, Namibia with the same, and the pro-democratic forces in the region scrapping for whatever they could negotiate, which could end up being a choice between the firing squad and the crocodile pit. [Ref. 76]

By and large, however, the conservatives saw the accords as an indication that Reagan's active policies were successfully countering the Soviets.

> Three years of patient, quite diplomacy by the Reagan administration are beginning to bear fruit in southern Africa. If all continues to go as well as it has recently, the United States soon may be able to claim that it has blunted and ever reversed the Soviet Union's southward thrust down the continent of Africa. [Ref. 77]

Liberals agreed that the Nkomati and Lusaka accords were obvious steps in the right direction, although they too had some reservations. Most important was the question of motives for signing. It seemed clear that Mozambique was in serious trouble, politically and economically. The liberal concern was that the Mozambicans, because they entered into the agreement under duress, would have unrealistically high

expectations. This meant the stakes would be just as high in case of failure. The Machel government had already accepted a political humiliation just in signing the accord [Ref. 78] a failure to see quick results might cause even more instability.

The majority, though, saw these accords as extremely valuable to U.S. interests. In the standard liberal view

> Every move toward reducing conflict in the region and racism in South Africa is in the global interest of the U.S. It probably doesn't matter whether Mozambique and Angola see negotiations as an attempt to preserve their beleaguered revolutionary regimes or as a turn to the West. The less their need for Soviet arms, the less their countries will rely on ties to Moscow. [Ref. 79]

The convergence of liberal and conservative perceptions during this time has one other element that should be noted. One clear distinction between the two images has been seen throughout this work: placing situations in an East-West context. It is interesting that the two perceptions seem to have drawn even closer together even on this point. The conservatives appear to have recognized the importance of a nonideological approach to certain situations. Meanwhile, liberals also recognized that long-term East-West consequences would also have to be calculated in any move. The Chester Crocker policy, for example, left the Cubans the opportunity to leave Angola claiming success and the Soviets the chance to draw back, yet leave Marxist regimes standing. [Ref. 80]

> Those of us who have criticized Reagan for overdoing the aspect of East-West competition in the Third World need to pay attention. This tendency has been repeatedly identified as the element working against local accommodation. But precisely the explicitness and credibility of his East-West emphasis is what appears to have brought the South Africans around. [Ref. 80]

The liberal and conservative images of a declining Soviet threat in Africa were reinforced with the Lusaka and Nkomati accords. The liberals continued to see the threat as a function of local conditions. The conservative continued to see the threat as basically determined by the level of U.S. resolve. But while there are still obvious differences in their assessments, it seems that these two images began to converge even more closely during this time.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

There are a myriad of American assessments of the Soviet threat in Africa. These assessments vary widely in tone and composition. This work has been an attempt to examine some of the images of the Soviet threat which are most widely held in the United States. While it is impossible to completely and clearly define and label these threat assessments, it can be shown that some broad categorizations can be accomplished. This work has been concerned with four such major categories: the alarmist, the conservative, the liberal, and the confident liberal. It has shown that the alarmist and confident liberal assessments assume, over time, a constancy in the level of the threat the Soviet Union poses to the United States in Africa. These two images, therefore, have not been examined in the light of actual events. The conservative and liberal images, on the other hand, can be shown to have changed throughout the ten year period 1975-1985, sometimes dramatically.

To conclude this work, brief summaries of the changes in assessments will be presented, along with the prospects for the future. Finally, some general observations will be offered.

A. CONSERVATIVE

In the conservative image Moscow's involvement in Angola was consistent with Soviet goals and was a clear indication that Soviet influence was rising dramatically. The USSR's actions in Ethiopia were seen as the next logical step in a communist drive into Africa. Evidence that the Soviets and Cubans may have been involved in the two incursions into Zaire from Angola by Katangan secessionists led the conservatives to conclude that the Soviets were firmly and confidently entrenched in Africa. Soviet influence was continuously growing and a lack of U.S. resolve encouraged Moscow. The developments surrounding the independence of Zimbabwe, said the conservatives, provided many opportunities for the Soviets to exert influence in Harare. Outside the continent, the invasion of Afghanistan was seen as a logical extension of Soviet expansion following successes in Africa. Throughout this period, then, the conservatives saw Soviet influence in Africa rising sharply.

The election of Ronald Reagan marked a dramatic shift in conservative assessments of the Soviet threat. Reagan, it was believed, would bring about a reassertion of American resolve. This was the key to countering Soviet influence. The U.S. invasion of Grenada was seen as a clear indication that an active, confrontational American foreign policy could stem the tide of communism. Finally, developments in southern Africa (the Nkomati and Lusaka accords) were

perceived to be further setbacks for the Soviets.

The conservative image of the Soviet threat in Africa during this ten year period was one which perceived Soviet influence to be rising from 1975 until the election of Ronald Reagan, at which time the Soviets were successfully countered and the threat diminished.

B. LIBERAL

The liberal image of the Soviet threat also saw Soviet involvement in Angola as an indication that Soviet influence was rising on the continent, albeit for a much different reason than the conservative. Soviet influence was seen to be growing as a result of local conditions which provided opportunities, not due to a failure of the U.S. to confront the USSR. With the Soviet actions in support of the radical Mengistu government in Ethiopia, the liberal perception of the Soviet threat split into two camps.

The first camp saw Soviet influence decline because of Moscow's ouster from Somalia and overextension of Soviet capabilities. The second faction saw Soviet involvement in Ethiopia as another indication that Soviet influence was rising; again, though, opportunities had been created by local realities, such as the drought and Haile Selassie's indifferent domestic policies.

The independence of Zimbabwe was seen by both liberal factions as a downturn in Soviet influence. The aloofness of the Mugabe government toward the Soviet Union and the

ability of the West to achieve a negotiated solution were setbacks for the Soviets. The invasion of Afghanistan was seen by both liberal camps as damaging to the Soviet Union's credibility in the Third World and, again, overextension of Soviet capabilities.

The election of Reagan brought another split in liberal assessments. One faction saw Reagan's confrontational stance as encouraging the RSA to become more aggressive and creating further instability. Further, identification of the U.S. with the white South African government was seen as damaging to the U.S.'s Third World credibility. The second liberal faction was more confident that local realities were continuing to limit the Soviets in Africa.

These two assessments again converged somewhere around 1982-83, when the less confident liberals began to agree that regional realities were indeed placing tremendous constraints on Soviet influence. The non-aggression pacts reinforced the notion that Soviet influence was rapidly declining.

C. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

It is clear that if there are many assessments of such particular situations, there are bound to be at least as many predictions of the future.

The alarmist will continue to see Soviet influence as rapidly climbing. This image could predict no other outcome, due to the very nature and composition of the

alarmist threat assessment.

The confident liberal will continue to see local and international constraints totally overwhelm both the Soviet Union and the United States. Both superpowers are severely limited in what they can hope to achieve on the continent. Any changes in levels of influence are simply temporary and spurious developments.

There was some evidence that the conservatives were becoming aware that placing local situations in an East-West context was misleading and dangerous. The U.S. government's movement toward Angola and Mozambique seemed to indicate that this recognition had indeed occured. Recent official statements and sanctions against Nicaragua, however, have dispelled these notions. It appears that the conservative will continue to be driven by ideological notions, despite evidence to support other approaches.

The liberal seems to be developing more confidence that local realities will constrain the Soviets. These liberals, in contrast to the confident liberal image, will continue to support an active U.S. policy which attempts to solve those local problems which create opportunities for Soviet influence.

It seems clear that if the Accord of Nkomati collapses, there will be significant reassessments made by both the liberal and conservative camps. The recent discovery of a South African military unit in Cabinda also promises to be a

serious incident with important consequences. Whatever assessments are made, perceptions of the Soviet threat will be colored by beliefs about the components discussed in the methodology. This implies that there will be a certain consistency in the American images of the Soviet threat in Africa.

D. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Some very general observations can be made following this examination of American threat assessments. One of the most interesting questions raised is "How important is what the U.S. believes about Soviet influence?" Obviously on one level it is very important. America clearly appears to have the power to bring about certain changes in Africa, especially militarily. Could such a policy move be legitimized? Clearly American perceptions of the threat would affect the policy process. But this is simply saying that American perceptions are important to Americans.

Beyond this level is the question of what Third World leaders believe. One common and very important mistake appears to be the transferring of American perceptions onto African leaders. Is what the U.S. thinks about the Soviets really important to Machel or Mobutu or Mengistu? It is these policy-makers and others like them who will ultimately effect change in Africa. While U.S. opinions may matter to them, it is a serious mistake to assume that what is important to the U.S. is important to Africans.

Americans, whether conservative or liberal, are faced with dilemmas when assessing the Soviet threat. Liberals believe that local conditions dominate events, but they cannot deny that East-West rivalry is a very real factor. Conservatives, on the other hand, must recognize that local realities are important, despite their contention that the East-West competition dominates world events. The task, then, is to effectively and intelligently balance these factors in ones own mind in order to develop a coherent assessment of the Soviet threat. Unfortunately, neither the conservative nor the liberal seems willing to accept the merits of the other's arguments.

An examination of the literature evokes another observation which is not at all startling. It can be shown that in times when the liberal sees Soviet influence increasing, he still notes Moscow's weaknesses. This indicates the underlying optimistic nature of the liberal assessment. The conservative, conversely, continues to note Soviet strengths even when he has concluded that Soviet influence is declining. This points out the basic pessimism which underlies his assessment. This also highlights another conservative dilemma. Due to the confrontational nature of the conservative's policy, he wants to identify and exploit Soviet weaknesses; yet, because of the very composition of his threat assessment, he is continually, cautiously identifying Soviet strengths.

In sum, the debate between liberal and conservative is not whether the Soviet threat exists. The questions really are: how much of a threat is it, where are we threatened, and how do we cope with this threat?

> A recognition of the character and threat of communist regimes is present on both sides of today's argument. Casting doubt on the patriotism or wisdom of citizens who disagree with the policy does not further the cause of a national consensus. The debate is not over <u>whether</u> we should or should not prevent further threats to our interests; it is over <u>how</u>. [Ref. 81]

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